

Appl. No. 09/785,700  
Response dated Dec. 27, 2005  
Reply to Final Office Action of June 27, 2005  
Docket No. 6169-156

IBM Docket No. BOC9-2000-0017

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

~~a merchant computer system~~ generating in a merchant computer system a merchant request to stimulate commerce for at least one ~~merchant-specified~~ merchant-specified product;

establishing a computer communications session between the merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system, wherein the merchant request is conveyed to the third-party remote shopping stimulation system;

~~said third-party remote shopping stimulation system~~ reading with said third-party remote shopping stimulation system consumer purchase information from [[said]] a plurality of merchant computer system systems, said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information;

based at least in part on said consumer purchase information, identifying one or more potential consumers who have purchased at least one related product related to [[of]] the at least one merchant-specified merchant-specified product, the at least one related product being a product that is consumed jointly with the at least one merchant-specified product;

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, associating said promotional material corresponding to said at least one ~~merchant-specified~~ merchant-specified product with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

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2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers of the at least one ~~merchant~~ specified merchant-specified product, ~~wherein the product consumption rate is used to determine that a previously purchased product is due to be replaced or upgraded.~~
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material and said consumer purchase information include ~~person-to-person~~ person-to-person transactions and Internet-based transactions.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein each said step is performed responsive to the merchant system detecting a business necessity, wherein said business necessity is at least one of an associated merchant having excess inventory and an associated merchant experiencing a revenue shortfall.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants, and wherein the third-party remote shopping stimulation system responds to merchant requests from said plurality of different merchants.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one ~~merchant specified~~ merchant-specified ~~products includes services~~ product is a service.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, said product information comprising product expiration information and product identifying information, wherein

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said step of identifying one or more potential consumers of products is based upon the expiration information of products.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

~~a plurality of merchant computer systems each~~ system configured to generate a merchant request to stimulate commerce for at least one ~~merchant specified~~ merchant-specified product;

a merchant inventory management system configured to track and statistically establish a norm of an inventory level of the at least one merchant-specified product based on received shipments and sales by the merchant of the at least one merchant-specified product;

a shopping stimulation logic unit in communication with said merchant inventory management system for detecting a business necessity of the merchant and identifying one or more potential consumers of the at least one ~~merchant specified~~ merchant-specified product in response to ~~received requests from said merchant computer systems,~~ and for identifying a the business necessity, wherein said shopping stimulation logic unit is disposed in a third party computer system that is remote from a merchant and consumer computer system wherein said shopping stimulation logic unit detects the business necessity by detecting when the inventory level of the at least one merchant-

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specified product deviates from the established norm by more than a pre-selected threshold;

a promotional information database, accessible by said shopping stimulation logic unit, for storing promotional information relating to said at least one ~~merchant specified~~ merchant-specified product~~[[,]] wherein said promotional information database includes promotional information for a plurality of different merchants; and,~~

a promotional material delivery system configured to make said promotional material available to said identified consumers.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:

a consumer purchase information data structure for storing consumer identifying information and product information corresponding to a purchase transaction.

12. (Original) The system of claim 10, further comprising:

a commerce system for collecting said consumer purchase information in a computer communications network environment.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, further comprising:

a point of sale system for collecting said consumer purchase information from in store and Internet purchases.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) ~~A machine readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for~~

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~~causing the machine to perform the steps of~~ A computer-implemented method of providing promotional material to consumers comprising:

~~a merchant computer system generating in a merchant computer system a merchant request to stimulate commerce for at least one merchant-specified merchant-specified product when a product life-cycle of said merchant-specified product is determined;~~

establishing a computer communications session between the merchant computer system and a third-party remote shopping stimulation system, wherein the merchant request is conveyed to the third-party remote shopping stimulation system;

~~said third-party remote shopping stimulation system reading with said third-party remote shopping stimulation system consumer purchase information from [[said]] a plurality of merchant computer system systems,~~ said consumer purchase information comprising consumer identifying information and product information;

~~based at least in part on said consumer purchase information determining an end of a product life-cycle of the merchant-specified product and, in response thereto, identifying one or more potential consumers of the at least one merchant-specified merchant-specified product based at least in part on said consumer purchase information;~~

in said third-party remote shopping stimulation system, associating said promotional material corresponding to said at least one ~~merchant-specified merchant-specified~~ product with said identified consumers; and

making said promotional material available to said identified consumers using a promotional material delivery system.

17. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, said identifying step further comprising determining a product consumption rate from said consumer purchase information to identify said one or more potential consumers of the at least one ~~merchant-specified merchant-specified~~ product, ~~wherein the product~~

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~~consumption rate is used to determine that a previously purchased product is due to be replaced or upgraded.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, wherein said promotional material and said consumer purchase information include ~~person-to-person~~ person-to-person transactions and Internet-based transactions.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, wherein each said step is performed responsive to the merchant system detecting a business necessity, wherein said business necessity is at least one of an associated merchant having excess inventory and an associated merchant experiencing a revenue shortfall.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, wherein said consumer purchase information is read from a purchase history database comprising consumer purchase information for a plurality of different merchants, and wherein the third-party remote shopping stimulation system responds to merchant requests from said plurality of different merchants.

21. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, wherein said at least one ~~merchant-specified products include services~~ merchant-specified product is a service.

22. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage method~~ of claim 16, wherein said product information ~~comprising~~ further comprises product expiration information and product identifying information, wherein said step of identifying one or

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more potential consumers of products is additionally based upon the expiration information of products.

23. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage-~~ method of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in electronic format.

24. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable storage-~~ method of claim 16, wherein said promotional material made available to said identified consumers is in printed format.